

Stravinsky
Anatoly Sheludyakov,
piano



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Igor Stravinsky
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Three Movements from

"Petrouchka" (1921)

1. Dance Russe 2:42
2. Chez Petrouchka 4:49
3. La Semaine 9:20

Les Cinq Deights (1921)

4. Andantino :56
5. Allegro 1:08
6. Allegretto 1:18
7. Larghetto 1:06
8. Moderato :43
9. Lento 1:20
10. Vivo :24
11. Pesante 1:20

Sonata for Piano (1924)

12. Qtr. note = 112 3:12
13. Adafietto 4:53
14. Qtr. note = 112 2:45

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15. Piano Rag Music 3:04
Serenade in A (1925)
16. Hymne 3:25
17. Romanza 3:01
18. Rondolelto 2:47
19. Cadenza Finale 3:32
Three Easy Pieces
(One Piano, Three Hands)
20. March 1:29
21. Waltz 2:00
22. Polka :54
Five Easy Pieces
(One Piano, Four Hands)
23. Andante 1:20
24. Espanola 1:02
25. Balalaika :48
26. Neapolitana 1:04
27. Galop 1:47

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IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882 – 1971)

The son of a leading bass at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov (1902–8), who was an influence on his early music, as were Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Glazunov and (from 1907–8) Debussy and Dukas. This colourful mixture of sources lies behind such pieces as *Fireworks*, *The Faun* and the *Shepherdess*, and the major ballet *Firebird*. It was not a simple matter of combining, however. A new musical element entered the mix—clean orchestral textures, "bright" instrumentation, and an emphasis on stamping, irregular rhythms—heard especially in the *Firebird's* "Infernal Dance of the King Katschei."

Firebird's success led to two more ballets for Diaghilev's Ballets russes: *Petrushka* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*, both landmarks of twentieth-century music. The Russian element becomes less Romantic and more "objectified." By *Le Sacre*, the "infernal" element of *Firebird* had erupted into a previously-unheard, epic "barbarism," so much so that some of the audience rioted at the Paris premiere. The score became an icon of musical modernism and influenced many other modern giants.

The end of World War I moved Stravinsky's in a new direction with *L'Histoire du Soldat*, *Tango*, and *Ragtime*. In all these scores, he introduces a pared-down aesthetic and what at first seems like an element of parody but which turns out to be an element of "objectification." Like a Cubist collage with everyday objects. At the same time, he becomes interested in classical procedures and updates them for an expanded harmonic language. Masterpieces include the octet, the "ballet with song" *Putcinella*, and *Oedipus Rex*, which takes off from the Handelian oratorio.

Between the two wars, he was probably the most influential modern composer, especially in the United States and France. His masterpieces include the *Concerto for two solo pianofortes*, the piano and the violin concerti, the ballets *Apollo* and *Jeu de Cartes*, *Concerto in D for strings*, *Dances Concertantes*, *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto*, *Symphony of Psalms*, *Symphony in Three Movements*, *Symphony in C*, *Ebony Concerto*, *Mass*, climaxing in the full-length opera *The Rake's Progress* (libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman), a twentieth-century classic. After *The Rake's Progress*, Stravinsky felt he had reached a creative impasse with the neoclassic style. He turned to serialism and became strongly influenced by the manner of Anton Webern, although he never lost his personal musical imprint. Major works include *Movements for piano and orchestra*, *The Dove Descending Breaks the Air* for chorus, *Cantata*, *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, *Three Shakespeare Songs*, *Threni*, *Introit*, and *Requiem Canticles*.

The 1920s saw an extraordinary enrichment of the solo piano repertoire ranging in style from conservative to avant-garde. In the Americas, compositions came from Villa-Lobos, Antheil, Sessions, Cowell, Ornstein, and Rudyard. In western Europe: Schoenberg, Hindemith, Faure, Messiaen, Poulenc, Milhaud, Mompou, Turina, Busoni, and Nielsen. Farther east: Bartok, Dohnanyi, Martinu, and Szymanowski. Contributors with Russian roots included Prokofiev, Medtner, Miaskovsky, Shostakovich, and Alexander Tcherepnin.

Igor Stravinsky produced four varied works during the 1920s: *The Five Fingers*; *Three Movements from Petrushka*; *Sonata for Piano*; and *Serenade in A*.

The Five Fingers (1921) bears the subtitle Eight Easy Pieces on Five Notes. Each piece restricts the right hand to a melodic range of five notes with uncomplicated accompaniments in the left hand. Stravinsky's son, Soulima, commented admiringly on the variety of sound and flexibility in his father's performance of these pieces.

Three Movements from Petrushka is dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein who, according to Stravinsky, paid him a larger fee for this work than Diaghilev paid for the complete ballet! Stravinsky insisted *Three Movements* was not a piano reduction of the ballet's orchestra score, but "piano music." It also contains passages found in a 1918 version of the work for pianola (a mechanical player piano). Stravinsky, having the immense skills of Arthur Rubinstein in mind for the *Three Movements*, not only produced a tour de force of chord, octave, and arpeggio technique, but a way of writing that makes the piano sound exceptionally brilliant and orchestral. Unfortunately, Rubinstein did not record this piece, but the German pianist Carl Seemann recalled, with great pleasure, hearing Rubinstein perform it.

Stravinsky's two other solo piano works from the 1920s, written within a twelve-month period, embrace a neo-classicism. He indicated that his title, *Sonata for Piano*, did not reflect the form of Haydn and Mozart sonatas but referred to the original meaning of the source word, sonare, meaning sound, as opposed to vocal music (cantare). Proceeding with a fairly rapid, often perpetual motion, the sonata's outer movements frame the remarkable Adagio in which Stravinsky presents one of his most elaborate flights of decorated melody. The sonata received its first performance at the Donaueschingen Festival in July 1925.

A practical and a musical motivation influenced the composition of the *Serenade*. Stravinsky was negotiating the recording of some of his music with an American record company. Thus the time limitations per side of 78-rpm recordings dictated the length of the movements of the *Serenade*. The other influence was his desire to write some music "in imitation" of the eighteenth-century serenade, music often intended for special occasions. In his Autobiography, Stravinsky described the Hymne as a "solemn entry," the Romanza as "ceremonial homage paid by the artist to the guests," the Rondoleto as filling the role of "various kinds of dance music," and the Cadenza Finale as a "sort of epilogue which was tantamount to an ornate signature with carefully inscribed flourishes." The *Serenade* was premiered in November 1925, in Frankfurt.

Stravinsky described *Piano-Rag Music* (1919) as a written-out portrait of improvisation. Roman Vlad writes that in it "jazz elements are broken down and crushed to a pulp, then reassembled as if processed by a diabolical machine."

The two sets of pieces for piano duet date from 1915 and 1917, respectively. *Three Easy Pieces* has a simpler part given to the second pianist. The reverse holds for *Five Easy Pieces*, composed for Stravinsky's children.

Notes by Richard Zimdars



Anatoly Sheludyakov was born in Moscow in 1955 where he graduated from the Russian Academy of Music and completed his postgraduate studies there under Professor Anatoly Vedernikov. He also graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in the composition class of Tikhon Khrennikov. In 1977, Mr. Sheludyakov was the winner of the Russian National Piano Competition. He has performed solo concerts with orchestras, solo recitals, and chamber music performances in the most prestigious concert halls in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other major cities in Russia, the United States, Germany, France, Italy, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, China and Australia. He has recorded seven CDs and has performed on Russian radio and television. Mr. Sheludyakov was distinguished as honored artist of Russia in 1999. His repertoire includes the major works for piano, piano and orchestra, and piano chamber music of the baroque, classical, romantic, and contemporary periods. He has been an assistant professor of piano at the Russia Academy of Music and maintains a private piano studio. Mr. Sheludyakov is an artist-in-residence at the University of Georgia.